



Lewis & Clark Public Health

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For immediate release

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Successor Named to Retiring County Health Officer

The Lewis and Clark City-County Board of Health has hired Drenda Niemann to serve as the next county health officer and director of Lewis and Clark Public Health. She will replace Melanie Reynolds, who is retiring in June after 12 years in the position.

For the past five years, Niemann has been administrator of the Community Health Promotion Division at the health department. In that role, she has been responsible for the agency's chronic disease prevention programs, Medicaid waiver programs, and programs related to family and child health, including home visiting and the WIC supplemental nutrition program.

"Drenda brings a wealth of public health experience and leadership to this position and we're excited she has accepted the health officer role," said Jim Benish chair of the Health Board.

Niemann has a bachelor's degree in counseling, psychology, and social work from the University of Great Falls and a master's degree in public administration and nonprofit leadership from Walden University.

Before coming to the health department, Niemann worked as director of Youth Connections, a program aimed at preventing and reducing substance abuse and violence among Helena-area teens. She also has worked at the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services and is an officer in the Montana Air National Guard.

"I look forward to serving Lewis and Clark Public Health and the residents of the county in my new role," Niemann said. "I believe my collaborative spirit, passion for the community, and focus on mission and quality will contribute to improving the health and welfare of county residents."

Reynolds will retire effective June 11. During her tenure as health officer, she spearheaded the effort to get the health department nationally accredited for the first time.

"It's been an honor and a pleasure to work with such dedicated and professional public health staff and engaged community partners," she said. "No one can make a difference without the support and help of many others. I was lucky to have that in spades."